

The Impact of Using Grammarly on Writing Skills of Second Semester English Language Students of Nusa Cendana University in the Academic Year 2024/2025

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
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Received : Nov, 30 th 2025 Revised : Dec, 18 th 2025 Accepted : Dec, 23 rd 2025	The aims of this study were to examine the impact of Grammarly on students' writing skills, focusing on grammar, coherence, vocabulary, and overall quality, and explore how students utilized Grammarly in their writing process. The data were collected through a writing test in forms of descriptive texts with topics of person, event, and place, and interviews to explore students' perceptions of Grammarly. Grammarly was applied as a supporting tool, and the writing results were analysed using the COVGM rubric (Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanic). The findings show that Grammarly helps students improve their grammar accuracy, enrich vocabulary, and organize ideas more coherently. In addition, interview results reveal that students feel more confident and motivated in writing since Grammarly provides real-time feedback and practical suggestions. This study concludes that Grammarly has a positive impact on students' writing development and can be used as a complementary tool in academic writing courses.
Keywords:	<i>Impact, Grammarly, Writing Skills</i>

1. Introduction

Writing is one of the most essential yet challenging skills in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). It requires learners to simultaneously control grammar, vocabulary, organization, and mechanics while expressing ideas clearly and coherently. In academic contexts, writing becomes even more demanding because students are expected to produce accurate, well-structured texts that follow formal conventions. According to Richards and Renandya (2002), writing is a complex cognitive activity that involves planning, drafting, and revising, which often poses difficulties for EFL learners, particularly those in the early stages of higher education.

Second-semester university students, who are still developing their academic writing foundation, frequently struggle with grammatical accuracy, appropriate word choice, and coherence in their written texts.

Along with the advancement of technology, various digital tools have been introduced to support students' writing development. One of the most widely used tools is Grammarly, an AI-based writing assistant that provides real-time feedback on grammar, spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, and sentence clarity. Grammarly allows learners to identify and correct errors independently, offering immediate suggestions and explanations that can enhance language awareness. Previous studies have suggested that automated feedback tools can support writing accuracy and promote learner autonomy by enabling students to revise their work more effectively (Bitchener & Ferris, 2012). However, while Grammarly is increasingly popular among students, especially in non-native English-speaking contexts, its actual impact on students' writing skills and how students utilize the tool during the writing process still require further empirical investigation.

In the context of English language education at Nusa Cendana University, writing instruction often faces challenges such as limited classroom time for individual feedback and varying levels of student proficiency. Observations show that many second-semester students experience difficulties in producing grammatically accurate and coherent descriptive texts. Although Grammarly is frequently used by students as a supporting tool, there is limited research that specifically examines its impact on writing skills using clear assessment criteria, such as content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics (COVGM). Therefore, this study aims to examine the impact of using Grammarly on the writing skills of second-semester English language students at Nusa Cendana University and to explore how students utilize Grammarly during their writing process. The findings of this study are expected to provide insights for lecturers and students regarding the effective integration of AI-based writing tools as complementary resources in academic writing courses.

2. Research Method

This research employed a mixed-methods design with a one-shot case study approach, which was selected to examine the impact of using Grammarly on students' writing skills and to explore how students utilized the application during the writing process.

This design was considered appropriate because the study aimed not only to measure students' writing performance after using Grammarly but also to understand their perceptions and experiences in using the application. The mixed-methods approach allowed the researcher to integrate quantitative data from writing test results with qualitative data

from student interviews, providing a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem. By using this approach, the researcher was able to capture both measurable improvements in writing quality and the subjective experiences of students in a natural classroom setting without manipulating learning conditions.

The data collection involved two main instruments: a writing test and semi-structured interviews. The writing test was administered to 37 second semester students of Class B in the English Language Education Study Program at Nusa Cendana University. Students were asked to write a descriptive text on one of the given topics, namely describing a person, a place, or an event. Grammarly was used as a supporting tool during the writing process. The students were given one week to complete the task, allowing them sufficient time to draft, revise, and edit their writing using Grammarly. The purpose of the writing test was to assess students' writing skills in terms of content, organization, vocabulary, grammar, and mechanics.

In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions, experiences, and strategies in using Grammarly. The interview participants were selected purposively based on their writing performance, representing different levels of achievement. The interviews focused on how students used Grammarly, the benefits they experienced, the challenges they faced, and their level of dependence on the application. This qualitative data provided deeper insight into how Grammarly influenced students' confidence, awareness, and motivation in writing.

The data analysis procedures differed according to the type of data collected. Quantitative data from the writing test were analyzed using descriptive analysis based on the COVGM rubric (Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanics). Each component was scored and classified into performance levels ranging from poor to excellent. The mean score was calculated to determine the overall writing performance of the students. Meanwhile, qualitative data from the interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved transcribing the interview data, coding key statements, grouping similar codes into themes, and interpreting the findings in relation to the research questions. Through this analytical process, the researcher was able to identify both the impact of Grammarly on students' writing skills and the ways students utilized Grammarly during the writing process.

3. Research Findings and Discussion

Research Findings

1) Improvement in Grammar and Mechanics.

Grammar and mechanics were the aspects that showed the most significant improvement. This finding supports the theory proposed by Bitchener and Ferris (2012), who emphasize that consistent and timely feedback plays a crucial role in improving learners' grammatical accuracy. In this study, Grammarly provided real-time corrective feedback on subject-verb agreement, verb tense, article usage, spelling, and punctuation, enabling students to notice and correct their errors independently.

Grammarly acted as a source of grammatical awareness by repeatedly exposing students to their common errors. Through continuous interaction with Grammarly's feedback, students became more aware of grammatical rules and writing conventions. This finding aligns with Hyland's (2003) view that feedback is essential in developing learners' confidence and competence in academic writing. Students reported that Grammarly helped them recognize mistakes they previously ignored, such as missing articles and incorrect verb endings. As a result, they became more cautious and reflective when constructing sentences, which contributed to more accurate and readable descriptive texts.

2) Improvement in Vocabulary Use

Vocabulary development was another important aspect influenced by the use of Grammarly. According to Nation (2001), vocabulary knowledge plays a crucial role in writing because it allows learners to express ideas more precisely and avoid repetition. The findings of this study indicate that Grammarly contributed positively to students' vocabulary use by helping them recognize inappropriate word choices and reduce repetitive expressions in their descriptive texts.

Grammarly functioned as a tool that increased students' lexical awareness rather than directly teaching new vocabulary. Students became more conscious of word repetition and began to replace overly simple words such as good, nice, or beautiful with more context-appropriate expressions. This process aligns with Ellis's (2005) view that vocabulary development in second language learning occurs gradually through exposure, noticing, and repeated use.

However, the findings also revealed that students did not always accept Grammarly's vocabulary suggestions automatically. Some students selectively rejected suggested synonyms because they felt the original words better represented their intended meaning.

This selective use indicates that Grammarly supported students' critical thinking and autonomy in writing, which is consistent with learner-centered writing theory (Hyland, 2003). Thus, Grammarly helped students improve vocabulary use while still allowing them to maintain control over their personal expression in descriptive writing.

➤ Students' Use of Grammarly in Writing

1. Grammarly as a Final Checker

Grammarly as a final checker refers to students who used the application only after completing their descriptive texts. In this pattern, students relied mainly on their own knowledge to generate ideas and organize content, while Grammarly functioned as a proofreading tool to detect grammatical and mechanical errors.

The findings revealed that students in this category commonly used Grammarly to correct subject-verb agreement, verb tense, article usage, and spelling mistakes. For example, several students initially wrote sentences such as "She wake up early" or "It have many chairs", which were later corrected by Grammarly into "She wakes up early" and "It has many chairs." This pattern indicates that Grammarly helped students improve grammatical accuracy at the surface level. However, it did not significantly influence content development or organization, since the writing had already been completed before Grammarly was applied.

2. Grammarly as a Real-Time Writing Assistant

Another prominent pattern was Grammarly as a real-time writing assistant. In this pattern, students activated Grammarly while drafting their texts and made corrections immediately based on the feedback provided.

Students who used Grammarly in this way showed better control of verb tense consistency and sentence structure. For instance, Grammarly instantly highlighted errors such as "we join the event yesterday" and suggested "we joined the event yesterday." Students accepted these suggestions while continuing to write, which helped them avoid repeating the same errors.

Interview data revealed that students preferred this method because it allowed them to learn faster and reduced uncertainty during writing. This pattern suggests that Grammarly functioned not only as a correction tool but also as a learning aid that guided students throughout the writing process.

3. Selective and Critical Use of Grammarly

Some students demonstrated selective and critical use of Grammarly. These students did not automatically accept all suggestions provided by the application, especially those related to vocabulary choice or sentence rephrasing.

For example, Grammarly suggested replacing simple expressions such as “quiet place” with “peaceful area” or “small road” with “narrow street.” However, some students chose to keep their original wording because they felt it better matched their intended meaning and level of proficiency.

This finding indicates that students in this category had higher writing awareness and were able to evaluate Grammarly’s feedback critically. Grammarly supported their writing, but student maintained control over their ideas and expression.

4. Grammarly as an Alternative or Second Opinion

The final pattern identified was Grammarly as an alternative or second opinion. Students in this category revised their writing independently before using Grammarly to confirm accuracy.

These students checked grammar and mechanics on their own and then used Grammarly to ensure there were no remaining errors. Grammarly mainly corrected minor mistakes such as punctuation or tense inconsistency without changing the structure of the text.

This pattern shows that Grammarly helped increase students’ confidence in submitting their work, as it reassured them that their writing was linguistically acceptable without encouraging overdependence.

➤ The Impact of Grammarly on Students’ Writing Skills

The findings from the writing test analyzed using the COVGM rubric (Content, Organization, Vocabulary, Grammar, and Mechanic) showed that Grammarly had a positive impact on students’ writing skills. Most students demonstrated improvement particularly in grammar, mechanics, and vocabulary accuracy.

Based on the results, 86.5% of students achieved Good, Very Good, or Excellent categories. Grammarly effectively reduced grammatical and mechanical errors, allowing students to focus more on idea expression. Interview data further revealed that Grammarly increased students’ writing awareness, confidence, and motivation.

However, the findings also showed that Grammarly had limited impact on content development and organization. Students who lacked ideas or struggled with coherence did not significantly improve in these aspects, even though grammatical accuracy

increased. This suggests that Grammarly is most effective as a supporting tool rather than a replacement for teacher instruction.

Table 1. Students Writing Performance Based on COVGM

Student	C	O	V	G	M	Total	Mean	Percentage	Category
S1	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S2	5	5	5	4	5	24	4.8	96	Excellent
S3	3	3	3	3	3	15	3.0	60	Fair
S4	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S5	5	4	5	4	4	21	4.2	84	Very Good
S6	4	4	5	5	5	24	4.8	96	Excellent
S7	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S8	5	4	3	5	5	24	4.8	96	Fair
S9	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S10	5	5	4	5	5	24	4.8	96	Excellent
S11	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S12	5	4	5	5	4	23	4.6	92	Excellent
S13	4	4	4	3	3	19	3.8	76	Good
S14	3	3	3	2	3	14	2.8	56	Fair
S15	4	4	4	5	3	22	4.4	88	Very Good
S16	5	4	5	5	4	21	4.2	84	Very Good
S17	4	4	4	5	4	24	4.8	96	Excellent
S18	3	5	4	5	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S19	3	3	3	3	3	14	2.8	56	Fair
S20	4	4	4	4	4	21	4.2	84	Very Good
S21	5	5	4	5	4	23	4.6	92	Excellent
S22	4	4	3	4	4	21	4.4	86	Good
S23	4	5	4	5	5	24	2.8	88	Very Good
S24	5	5	4	5	4	22	4.4	88	Very Good
S25	4	4	4	5	4	20	4.0	80	Good
S26	4	5	5	4	4	20	4.0	80	Fair
S27	5	5	4	5	5	25	3.0	80	Very Good
S28	4	4	4	4	4	22	4.4	88	Excellent
S29	5	5	4	5	5	21	4.2	84	Good
S30	4	5	4	5	4	22	4.4	88	Very Good
S31	5	5	5	5	5	25	5.0	80	Good
S32	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	88	Excellent
S33	5	5	5	5	5	24	4.8	96	Good
S34	4	4	4	4	4	20	4.0	80	Very Good
S35	5	5	4	5	5	24	4.8	96	Excellent
S36	4	4	5	5	4	24	4.8	96	Good
S37	5	5	5	5	4	24	4.8	96	Excellent

Based on the results of the writing tests and interviews, the use of Grammarly had a positive impact on the writing skills of second semester English Language students of Nusa Cendana University. Grammarly functioned as a supportive writing tool that helped students improve grammatical accuracy, vocabulary use, sentence structure, and writing mechanics.

Most students agreed that Grammarly assisted them in identifying and correcting errors that they often overlooked when writing independently. This indicates that Grammarly provided immediate feedback that supported students' writing development and increased their awareness of language accuracy.

The findings also show that Grammarly helped students feel more confident and motivated in writing. By reducing grammatical and mechanical errors, students were able to focus more on expressing their ideas clearly. As a result, Grammarly contributed not only to technical improvement but also to students' overall writing confidence and engagement in the writing process.

1. The Influence of Grammarly on Writing Skills

Based on the research findings, there are two main aspects that explain the influence of Grammarly on students' writing skills, namely improvement in writing performance and challenges faced by students when using Grammarly. These aspects were identified through the analysis of writing tests using the COVGM rubric and interviews conducted with selected students to gain deeper insights into their writing experiences.

2. Grammarly and Writing Performance

Grammarly plays an important role in improving students' writing performance because it provides instant corrective feedback during the writing process. When students receive immediate suggestions on grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics, they are able to revise their writing more effectively. The more frequently students use Grammarly, the more familiar they become with correct sentence patterns, verb forms, and word usage.

The findings show that students with higher engagement in using Grammarly achieved better results in their writing performance. This is evident from the COVGM scores, where most students reached good, very good, and excellent categories. Grammarly helped students reduce surface-level errors, which allowed them to produce clearer and more accurate descriptive texts.

3. Grammar, Vocabulary, and Writing Mechanics

Based on the analysis of students' writing tests, Grammarly had a strong influence on grammar, vocabulary, and mechanics. Many students showed

improvement in subject-verb agreement, verb tense consistency, article usage, punctuation, and spelling. These aspects are essential components of descriptive writing, and Grammarly effectively supported students in mastering them.

Students reported that Grammarly helped them notice repeated grammatical mistakes and correct them immediately. Vocabulary suggestions also helped students avoid repetition and choose more appropriate words, even though advanced vocabulary features were limited in the free version. As a result, students were able to write more accurate and readable texts.

4. Organization and Sentence Structure

The findings indicate that Grammarly also contributed to improvements in sentence structure and basic organization. Students were able to construct clearer sentences with better word order after receiving Grammarly's feedback. However, Grammarly's influence on overall organization was indirect. While it helped improve sentence clarity, it did not fully support paragraph development or idea elaboration.

Students with stronger writing foundations were able to use Grammarly more critically and effectively, resulting in better-organized texts. In contrast, students with limited writing skills still faced difficulties in developing ideas, even though grammatical accuracy improved.

5. Challenges Faced by Students in Using Grammarly

Based on the interview results, some students faced challenges when using Grammarly. One major challenge was over-reliance on automatic corrections. Several students admitted that they often accepted Grammarly's suggestions without fully understanding the grammatical rules behind them. This limited their deeper learning and long-term writing development.

Another challenge was that Grammarly could not help students generate ideas or expand content. Students who lacked background knowledge or writing experience still struggled with content development and coherence. In addition, technical issues such as limited internet access and restricted premium features also affected Grammarly's effectiveness for some students.

Overall, the findings show that Grammarly has a significant positive impact on students' writing skills, particularly in grammar, vocabulary, and writing mechanics. Grammarly functioned as a valuable supporting tool that helped students improve accuracy, increase writing awareness, and build confidence. However, its effectiveness depended on students' ability to use it critically and their existing writing skills.

Therefore, Grammarly should be used as a complementary tool alongside lecturer guidance and writing instruction. Strengthening students' understanding of writing principles and encouraging reflective use of Grammarly can further enhance their writing performance in academic contexts.

Discussion

The findings of this study show that Grammarly has a positive impact on the writing skills of second semester English Language students of Nusa Cendana University. The results of the writing test analyzed using the COVGM rubric and supported by interview data indicate that Grammarly effectively helps students improve grammatical accuracy and mechanics, particularly in subject-verb agreement, verb tense, article usage, spelling, and punctuation. This finding supports Bai and Hu (2017) and Bitchener and Ferris (2012), who emphasize that immediate and timely feedback plays an important role in developing writing proficiency. Through Grammarly's real-time feedback, students became more aware of their errors and were able to revise their writing more independently.

Furthermore, Grammarly contributed to improvements in vocabulary use and organization by reducing word repetition and allowing students to focus more on sentence coherence. However, differences were found in how students used Grammarly, ranging from a final checker to a real-time assistant. Some students relied too heavily on Grammarly and still struggled with idea development and content elaboration, which confirms Godwin-Jones' (2018) view that AI-based tools mainly address surface-level errors. Therefore, Grammarly is most effective when used as a complementary tool alongside lecturer guidance and regular writing practice.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Grammarly has a positive impact on the writing skills of second semester English Language students of Nusa Cendana

University. The results of the writing test analyzed using the COVGM rubric show that 86.5% of students achieved good, very good, or excellent performance levels, indicating improvement in grammar, mechanics, vocabulary, organization, and overall writing quality. The most noticeable improvement was found in grammatical accuracy and mechanics, including verb tense, subject-verb agreement, article usage, spelling, and punctuation. Grammarly's immediate feedback increased students' awareness of writing errors and supported independent revision, although vocabulary development was somewhat limited by the features of the free version.

Furthermore, students utilized Grammarly in different ways, such as a final checker, a real-time writing assistant, and a supportive second opinion after self-revision. Students who used Grammarly critically and combined it with their own writing knowledge tended to achieve better results, while those who relied too heavily on the application without understanding the feedback showed limited improvement, particularly in content development and organization. These findings indicate that Grammarly is effective as a supporting tool for improving writing accuracy and confidence, but it cannot replace lecturer guidance and explicit instruction in developing ideas and logical organization. Therefore, Grammarly should be used as a complementary tool alongside continuous writing practice and teacher feedback.

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